A Golden Tell-A-Tale® Book

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RUDOLPH

The Red-Nosed Reindeer

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The Red-Nosed Reindeer

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Adapted from the story by Robert L. May

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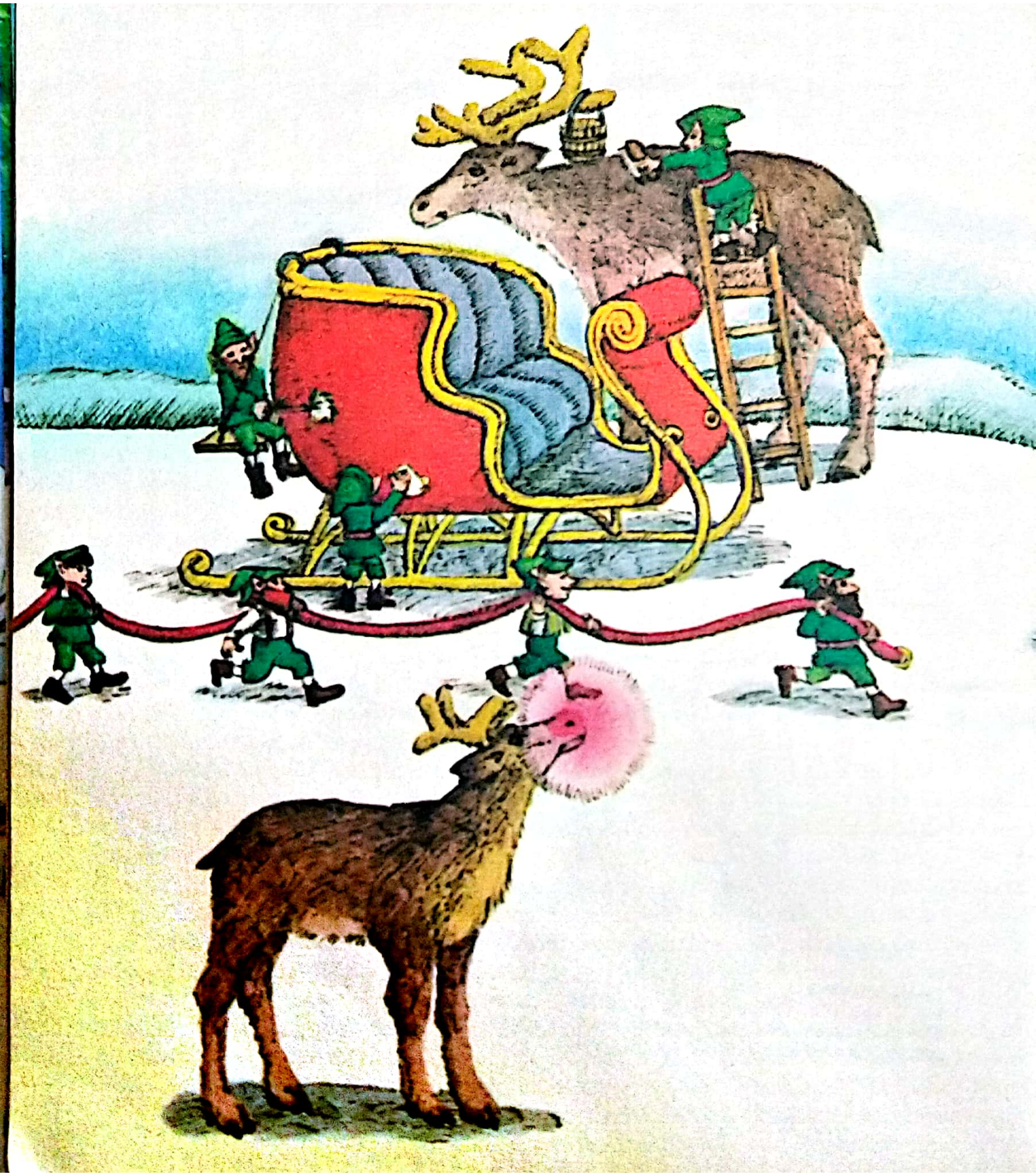
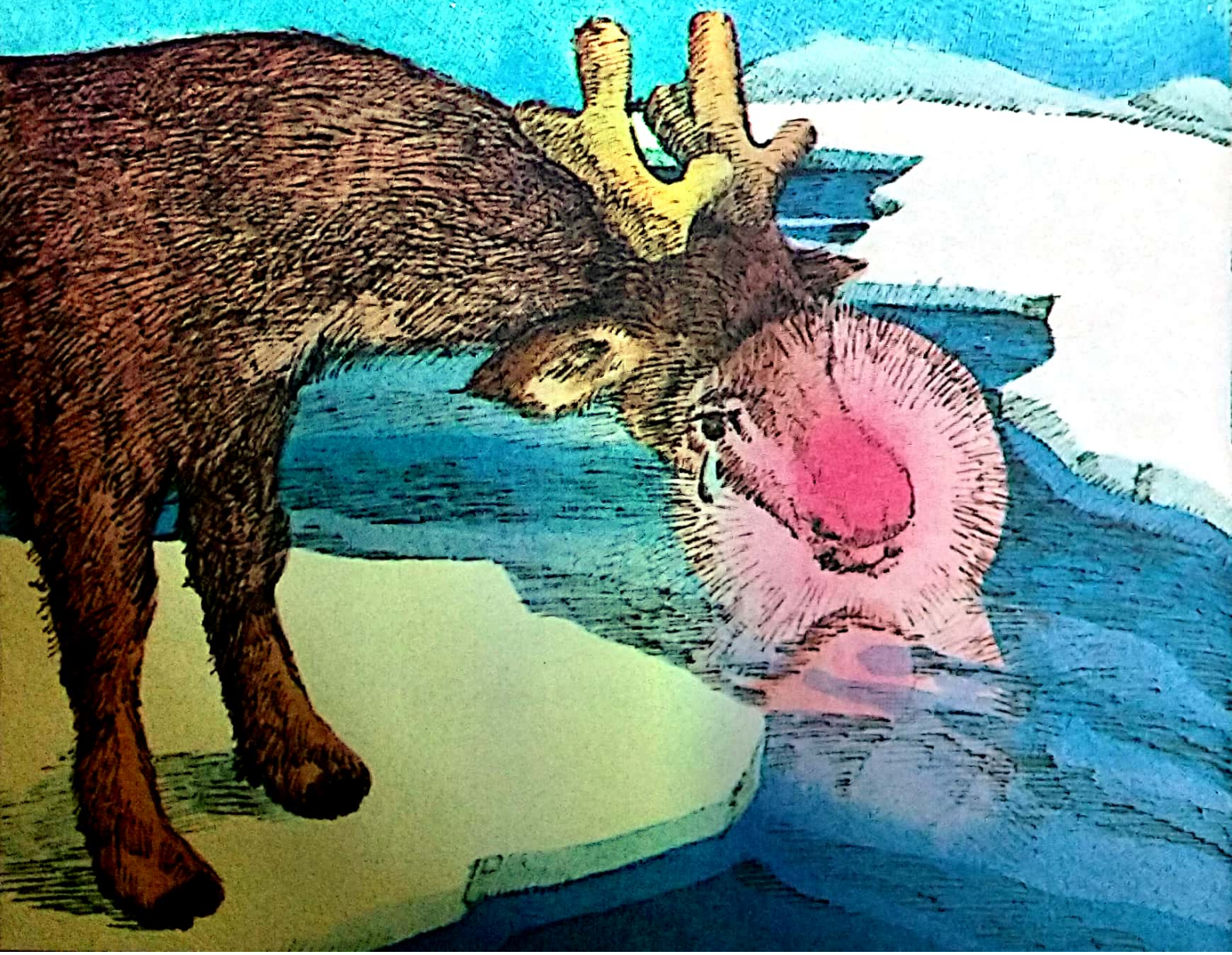


It was the day before Christmas, and excitement was everywhere—except in one corner at the North Pole, where Rudolph stood all alone, watching while the other reindeer had fun together.

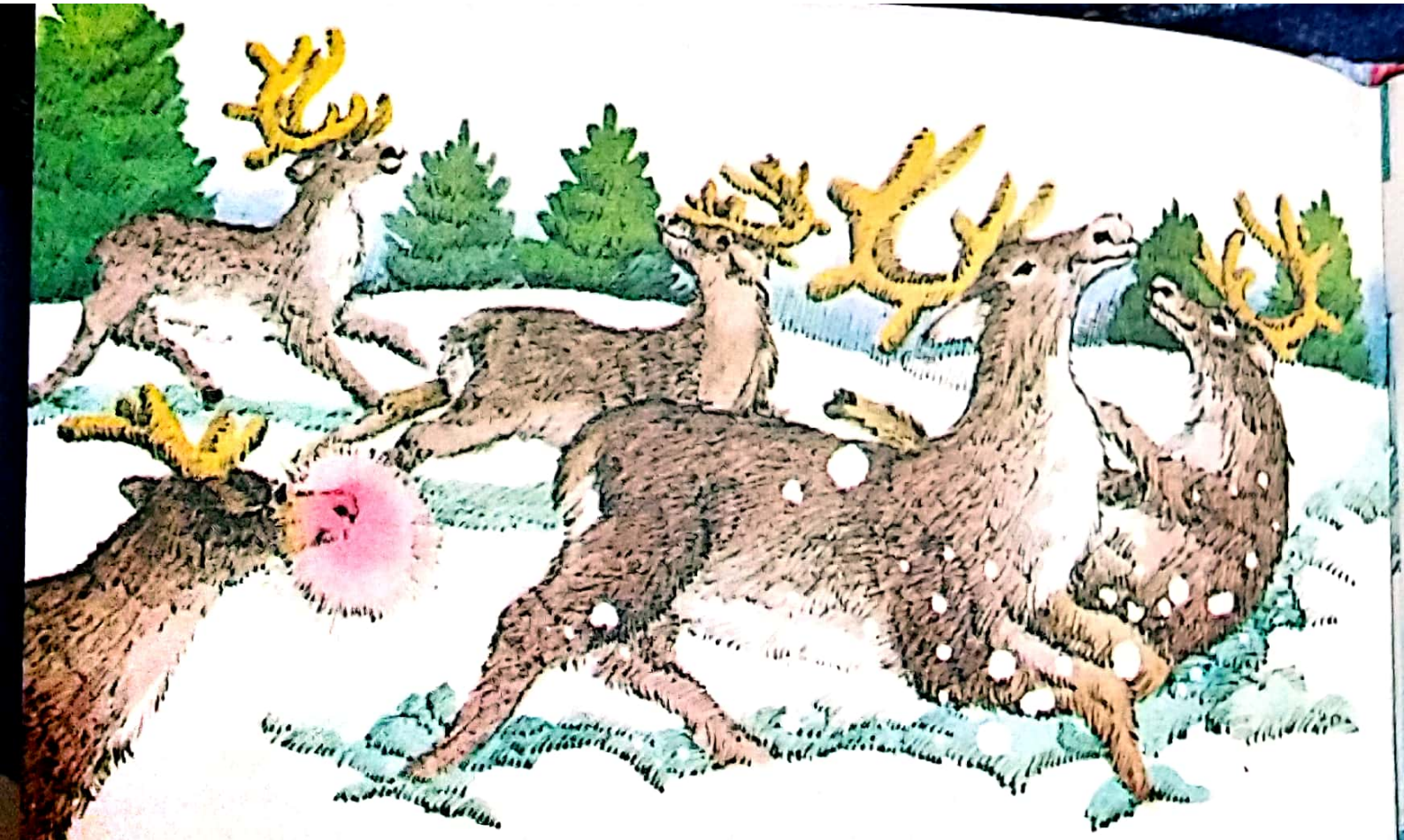
Rudolph was the smallest reindeer at the North Pole. The others were big, with strong, tall antlers.

Rudolph's antlers were little, just-beginning ones, but he knew they would grow big someday. That didn't bother him. What did bother him was his nose. It was simply not a regular reindeer nose at all. The other reindeer teased him about it.



"Look at Rudolph's nose," they said, snickering. "Who ever saw a *deer* with a nose so big and red? How did it get so-o-o red that it glows in the dark?" They thought of silly ways that it might have happened.

"Did a giant Christmas tree bulb get stuck on your nose?" they teased. "Or did you spill some catsup on it?"



The reindeer tumbled into snowdrifts in delight over their own jokes.

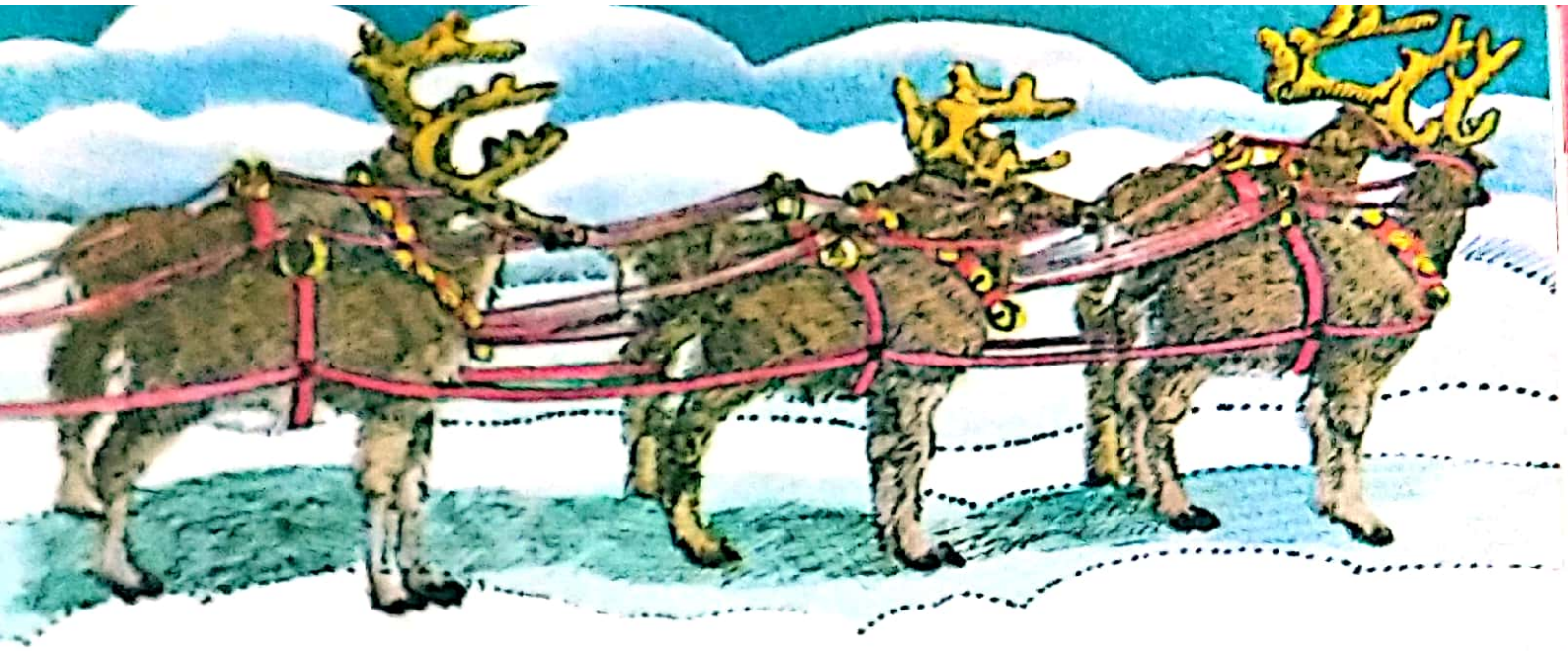
It was not fun for Rudolph. *I wish they wouldn't laugh at me,* he thought. *I wish that instead they would play with me.*

But when he asked to play with them, the other reindeer always said, "No! You're too little, and your nose is too red!"

Rudolph was very lonely and unhappy, even on Christmas Eve. All he could do was to pretend he was having fun all by himself, and sometimes he was—sort of.

Rudolph liked to toss snow fluffs high into the air. He liked to make tracks from here to there. And he liked to make long leaps that took him to secret places.

But playing would be much more fun with reindeer friends, Rudolph thought. Then, feeling sad, he stopped to rest in a cozy place, and before long he was fast asleep.



On that same Christmas Eve, everyone in Santa's Toyland was awake and hurrying and worrying. *Nothing* was going right.

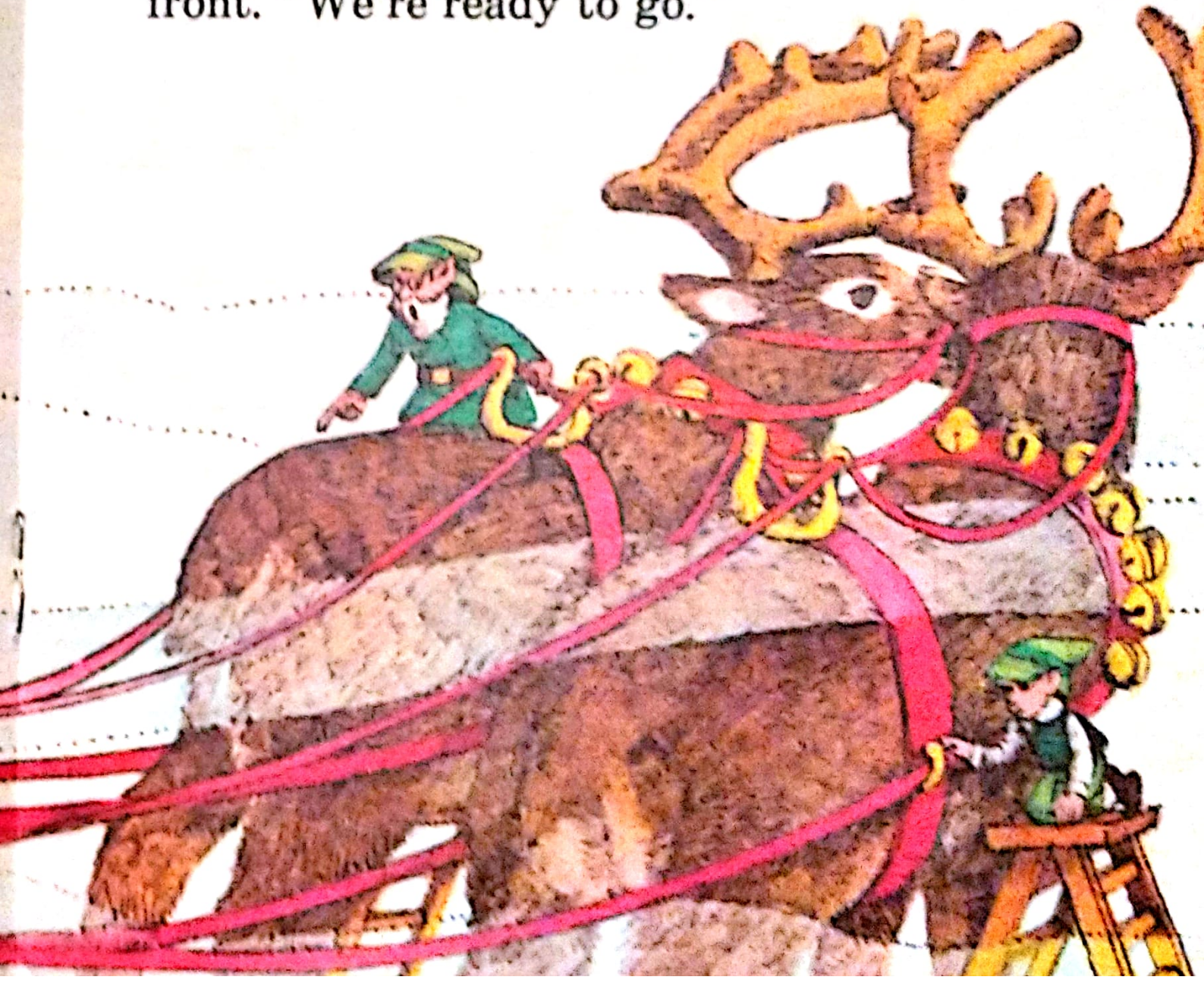
A terrible fog was making the earth darker and darker. It became very hard to see. Elves, carrying huge loads of toys for Santa's sleigh, bumped into each other. Everything went helter-skelter and had to be picked up.

Even Santa's reindeer were quarreling about who was going to lead the sleigh.

"It's our turn!" cried Prancer and Vixen to any reindeer who would listen. "You can't do it *all* the time."

"Enough of this fussing!" said Santa. "I'll need everyone's help on this extra-dark night." He looked around. "Where are Dasher and Dancer?"

"Here we are, Santa," they called from up front. "We're ready to go."



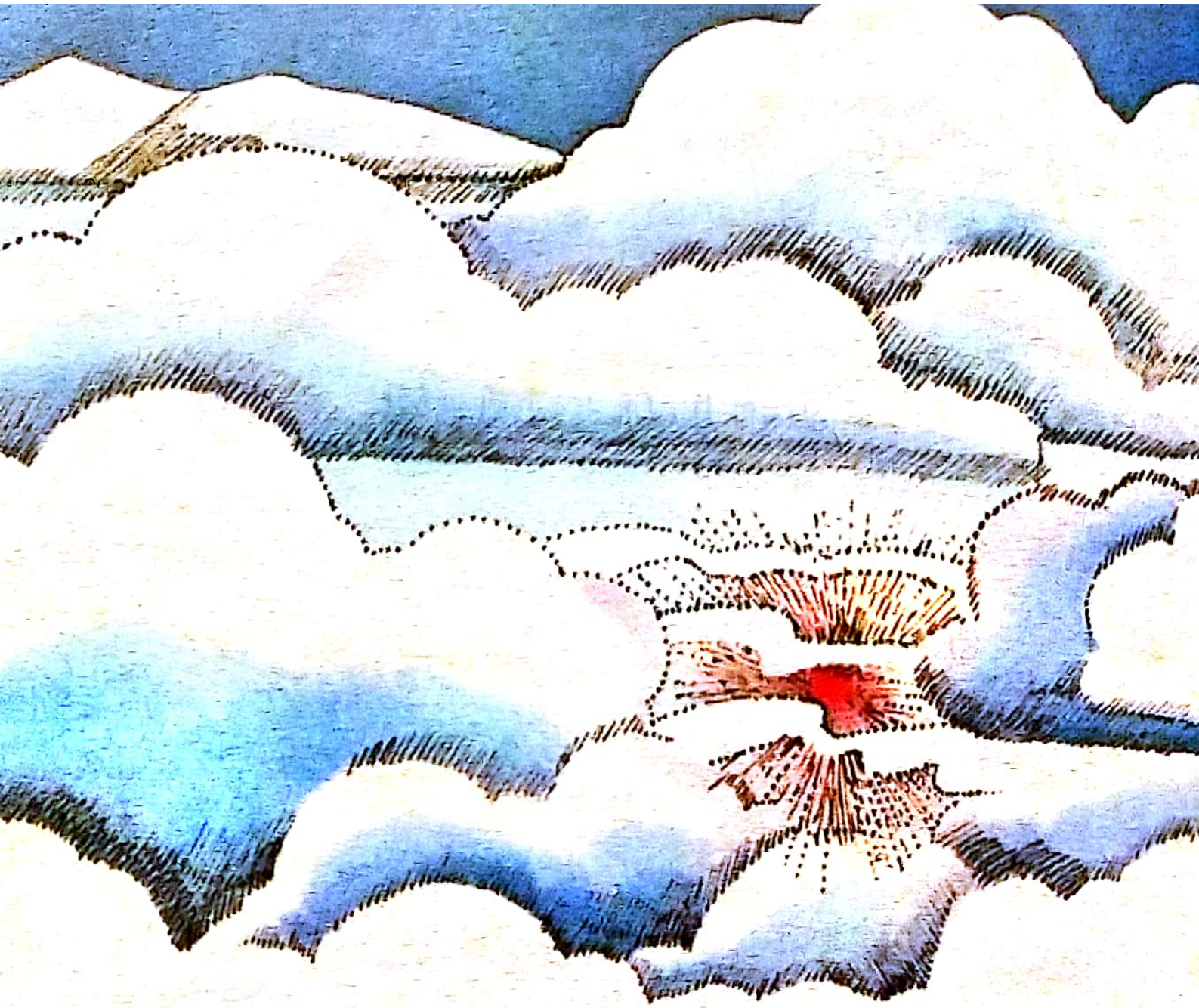
"I declare!" exclaimed Santa, jumping into his sleigh. "It's so dark, I can't even see my lead reindeer!"

Something else worried Santa. "We're late now, but we need to fly slowly so we won't have an accident. How can we possibly finish before Christmas Day?"

Santa gave the reins a little jerk. "On, Dasher! On, Dancer!" he called. "Maybe the fog will go away." Instead, the fog grew thicker. And strange things began to happen to Santa's reindeer and sleigh.

They bumped into tall snow hills, and they just barely missed sliding down the back of a *polar bear!* How could that be, when they thought they were far from the North Pole and flying high over a city?

Santa knew something awful had happened. They had been flying in circles over the North Pole, getting nowhere. Santa Claus and his reindeer were lost—on Christmas Eve! In the morning, boys and girls all around the world would wake up to find that Santa hadn't come!



"No! No!" Santa exclaimed. "That must not happen!"

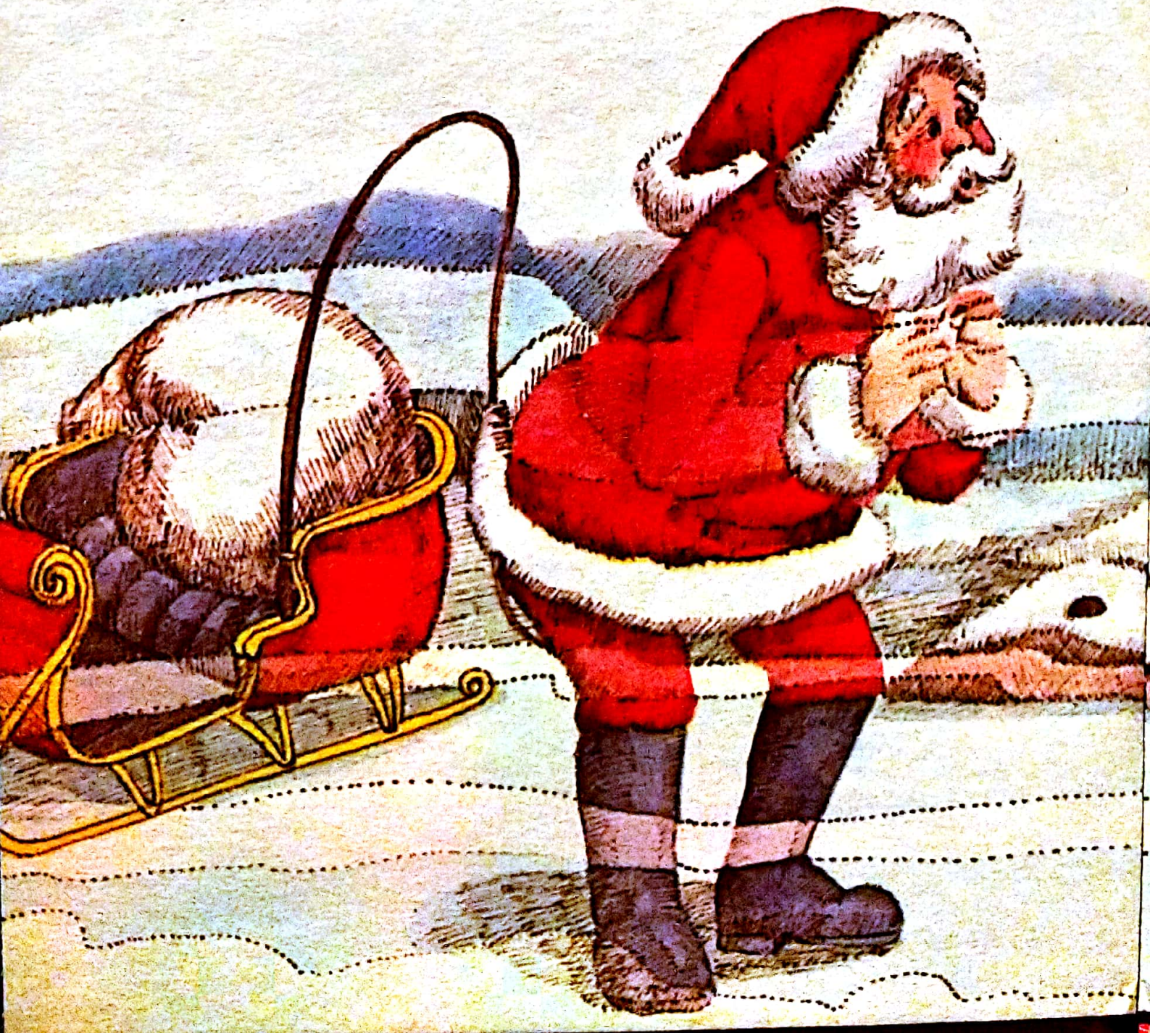
The night grew darker with fog—so dark that Santa couldn't see any of his reindeer. He grew more worried by the minute.

All at once, in the blackness of the foggy night, he saw a strange light far below. He leaned from his sleigh for a closer look.

"What can that be down there?" Santa wondered. "And how can I see it shining so brightly through this—"

Suddenly Santa called out, "Dasher! Dancer! Down to that light!"

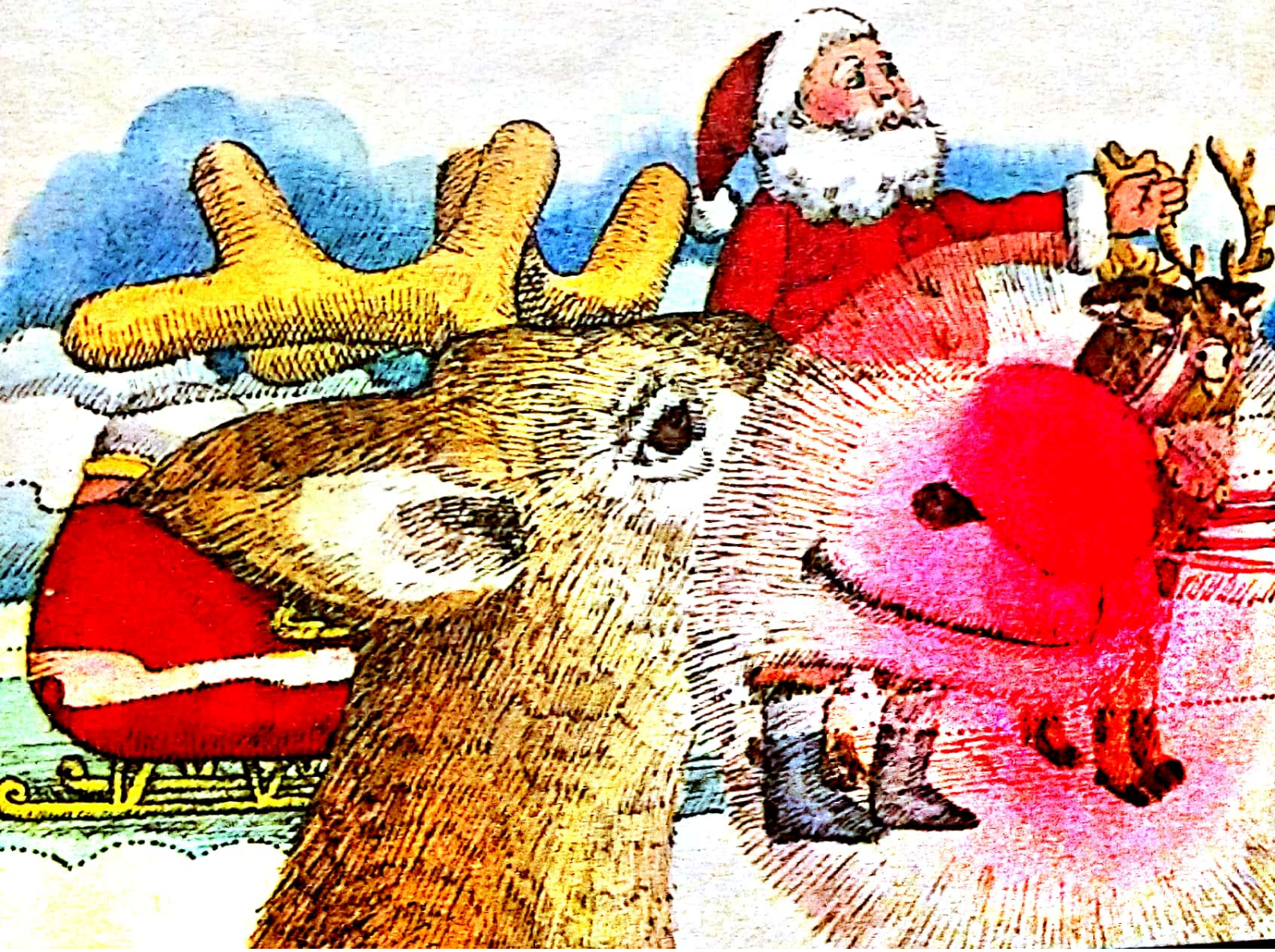
And before you can say, "*I* know what's lighting up the night," Santa was beside Rudolph, shaking him gently.



And Rudolph? Well, Rudolph did just what you would do if Santa stood beside you, waking you up. He blinked. He couldn't believe Santa was really there and asking him— What *was* Santa asking him?

"Won't you please help me tonight, Rudolph? We're lost. We need a light. Your beautiful shiny nose can show us the way. Will you lead all my reindeer?"

"Of course, Santa," said Rudolph. And he gave Santa the biggest, happiest smile that Santa had ever seen.



Holding his head high, Rudolph trotted to the front of the team. His nose made a lovely glow, lighting everything around.

The reindeer smiled big, welcoming smiles. Santa helped Rudolph with his harness, while the other reindeer made happy, jingling music with their bells.

Then, in a flash, off through the foggy night flew Santa and his sleighful of toys that would be delivered on time to happy children all around the world.

And proudly lighting the way was Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer!

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